

BOOK REVIEW

ANNE ORTH EPPLE and LEWIS E. EPPLE. 1995. *A Field Guide to the Plants of Arizona*. (ISBN 1-56044-314-6, pbk.) LewAnn Publishing Co., Mesa, Arizona, with SkyHouse Publishers, an imprint of Falcon Press Publishing Co., Helena, MT. Distributed by Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 1718, Helena, MT 59624. \$24.95. 347 pp., 899 color photos.

This ambitious field guide boasts almost 900 color photos picturing 850 of Arizona's over 3,000 species of plants. It covers wildflowers, cacti, trees, shrubs, vines, and ferns. The grasses and "weeds," as is often the case, are left out. After a brief introduction on scope and use, the six life zones of Arizona are delineated by altitude, rainfall, and vegetation parameters. Thereafter follows a captivating 176 pages of color photos. Anywhere from three to seven photos are pleasingly laid out in horizontal and vertical formats on each page. I found the photos to be a well-executed variety of what appears to be totally naturally lit, fill flash, and pleasantly "natural" full flash images. Many species are represented by two photos: one habit shot and a close up, or fruiting shot etc.

The photo section begins with the ferns and is followed by the trees, which are grouped by leaf shape. The cacti, grouped by general pad morphology, then logically segue into the agaves. Wildflowers and shrubs with conspicuous flowers are next, grouped by flower color, number of segments (basically number of petals), and sometimes regular versus irregular flowers. These and other additional sub-groupings make the photo section more diagnostic and useful compared to the simply color grouped format found in many field guides. Each photo is sequentially numbered, followed by a common name, and referenced to a text page where the description is found.

Next come the 295 pages of descriptions. Though some entries are somewhat brief all offer useful and interesting information. The text section is grouped phylogenetically by family. Each family entry has a common name, the scientific name (with phonetic pronunciation) and a general description of the family. Each species entry has one or more common names, the scientific name, description, elevation, habitat, and a comments section. The description sections vary in length and in some cases are somewhat spare but in other cases are very informative and botanical, requiring some facility with technical terms. What ever the descriptions may lack is more than made up by the comments section of each entry. I found them chocked full of wonderful little bits of information such as wildlife uses, medicinal uses, toxicity, derivation of the plant names, and addition curiosities of the plant. Also included is a pronunciation of the genus and the number of different species of that genus found in Arizona, and finally the location and date of the photo.

I really like the glossary that follows. Besides containing the usual defined botanical terms, it also includes the definitions of many Latin descriptors used in scientific plant names along with their various endings (Bravo!). This is a real plus for the amateur attempting to tackle the mumbo jumbo of the Latin lingo. And, no, I wouldn't leave out the index, the real proof of the pudding. Thirty-two pages of wonderfully readable and uncluttered bold-faced genera and scientific family names interspersed among the regular type faced common names and specific epithets.

This is a must have for anyone interested in the flora of Arizona. Practically every photo is a masterpiece and there is plenty of information in the text to keep anyone interested. Congratulations on a huge project so well-executed.—*Robert J. George*.